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The National Security Working Group (NSWG) provides wide-spectrum coverage of issues like the Iranian threat, missile defense, sequestration, New START, events in Syria and more. We look forward to providing this newsletter to RSC members and welcome your input throughout the 113th Congress.

Iran, Russia team up amid sequestration stranglehold (Rep. Franks)

Despite the temporary shutdown aversion, the Defense Department is still struggling with debilitating sequestration numbers, and no relief is in sight.

The stopgap-funding bill the President signed last week allows the Department of Defense to operate through Jan. 15 at budget levels in effect Sept. 30. But but the first year of sequestration cuts continue to hinder military training and civilian hiring freezes are still in place.

The second year of cuts to begin in January would demand cuts to \$475 billion, 10 percent below the Fiscal Year 2014 request of \$527 billion, and 8 percent below current spending.

Our Defense leaders, military and civilian have testified time and time again that they are at their limit. They have told us in open hearings and in closed meetings that as much as they are built to adapt and flex that they cannot absorb the impending cuts. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel has warned the cuts are “too steep and abrupt” and will leave the military at greater risk, and with fewer options, in the event of “major new national security contingency.”

Those pundits who say we should expect a reprieve in military spending because we are getting out of Afghanistan are wildly mistaken.

Just this week the head of Russia’s Air Force met his Iranian counterparts in Tehran to discuss boosting the military cooperation between their countries. The talks centered on “electronic listening systems, radar and missiles,” said Brig. Gen. Farzad Esmaili, head of Khatam-al-Anbia Air Defence Base. Meanwhile, as sequestration decreases our defense spending by 10 percent each year, Chinese officials are boosting their annual military spending by the same amount. Our enemies are expanding



The head of Iran's Revolutionary Guard aerospace forces, Gen. Amir Ali Hajizadeh, left, presents a copy of the Iranian ScanEagle drone - derived from the American model - to the head of the Russian air force, Gen. Viktor Bondarev, center, in Tehran two days ago.

their mission sets, growing their force sizes and experimenting with new technology week after week. Sun Tzu said, "The opportunity to secure ourselves against defeat lies in our own hands, but the opportunity of defeating the enemy is provided by the enemy himself." Colleagues, are we giving our enemies the opportunities they need to defeat us, or are we securing ourselves against defeat? Will we wait until another crisis erupts before solving this?

Military personnel and defense civilians may be back to work, but they are still operating under the cloud of budget sequestration. They deserve better than a temporary solution to keep their government funded. Future cuts to the Defense Department can be made in a more responsible manner, if they are to be made at all.

NSWG Contact: Ari Zimmerman, Ari.Zimmerman@mail.house.gov, 6-5536

Iran's latest nuclear offer (Rep. Fleming)

A lot of excitement was generated this past weekend over Iran’s latest proposal during global nuclear talks. The proposal would, among other things, halt all of Iran’s

uranium enrichment of 20 percent and scale back the number of centrifuges currently in operation. The offer, however, falls far short of Iran fully dismantling its nuclear program.

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"Iran's latest nuclear offer" - Rep. Fleming

Reports are circulating that President Obama and State Department officials are considering easing the current sanctions regime by offering access to billions of dollars in frozen funds. This overzealous reaction by the Administration before negotiations are even completed is imprudent.

Iran's ultimate goal is to negotiate a faux deal with the United States in exchange for easing sanctions and buying time to develop its nuclear weapons program. It's a similar tactic successfully pursued by North Korea, which engaged in a deal in 2005 to drop weapons development. North Korea has since conducted three underground nuclear tests. The Administration's public praise for the Iranian proposal and tone set by President Rouhani could lead to accepting agreements that do nothing to stop Iran



from obtaining a nuclear weapon, while sidelining Israel. Iran must begin to actually roll back its nuclear program before the U.S. begins considering changes in the sanctions regime.

NSWG Contact: Matthew.Silver@mail.house.gov, x5-2777

Each NSWG Item reflects the position and view of the authoring office. Questions or comments regarding the NSWG can be directed to: Jackie Rivera, Jackie.Rivera@mail.house.gov or 6-0678